

The Dangers of Secondhand Smoke

- Secondhand smoke, also known as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), is the smoke that comes from both the end of a burning cigarette or other tobacco product and the smoke exhaled by smokers.
- Smoke from the end of a burning cigarette is unfiltered and contains twice as much tar and nicotine as the smoke that a smoker inhales through the filter.
- Secondhand smoke has been classified as a Group A carcinogen by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This Group A rating is used only for substances that are proven to cause cancer in humans, such as asbestos and benzene.
- Secondhand smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals, many of which are known to cause cancer. Some chemicals commonly found in secondhand smoke are carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, tar, cyanide, ammonia, and benzene.
- The airborne chemicals in secondhand smoke create a toxic environment for anyone in close proximity to a smoker.
- Secondhand smoke has been associated with many of the same health problems as smoking:
 - Respiratory illnesses
 - Lung cancer
 - Cardiovascular disease
 - Heart disease
- Secondhand smoke can cause irritation to the eyes, nose and throat and can also irritate the lungs and lead to coughing and chest discomfort.
- Secondhand smoke is especially harmful to children. In Connecticut, 186,000 children are exposed to secondhand smoke at home.
- Secondhand smoke can decrease a child's lung function and has been associated with pneumonia, ear infections, bronchitis, coughing, wheezing, and increased mucus production in children.
- Secondhand smoke exacerbates asthma. A child exposed to secondhand smoke is more likely to develop asthma.
- Every year in the US an estimated 63,000 non-smokers die as a result of exposure to secondhand smoke; it is the third leading cause of preventable death.
- Annually in the US, an estimated 35,000 non-smokers suffer heart attacks as a result of breathing tobacco smoke.
- An EPA study concluded that every year about 3,000 non-smokers in the US die from lung cancer caused by secondhand smoke.
- There were 170 deaths attributed to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in Connecticut between 1994 and 2000. Some of these deaths may in part be due to the infant's exposure to secondhand smoke in the home.

***Secondhand smoke affects everyone—
Smokers and non-smokers alike.***



QUITLINE

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